EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

A TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF DR. GERALD KRATZ

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 31, 2003

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember educator, legislator, community leader and friend, Dr. Gerald Kratz, Dr. Kratz died at his home in Grass Lake, Michigan on January 28, 2003, only 29 days into his first term as a State Representative. His constituents and the State of Michigan have lost a man of integrity who was a true champion of education and community service.

Graduating in 1955 from Wayne State University with Bachelor of Science degrees in Social Studies and Art, Jerry began his career as an art teacher. He advanced to administration after completing a Master's degree in Education and a Doctorate of Education in curriculum development. His career in education administration spanned three decades, starting in 1972 as superintendent of the Novi Community School District for 8 years, and then serving as Superintendent for Curriculum and Personnel Relations for Southfield Public Schools. In 1973, Dr. Kratz became an adjunct professor at Eastern Michigan University. In 1980, he became the Superintendent of the Jackson County Intermediate School District where he was a tireless supporter of education, and championed the needs of special education students throughout Jackson County. Enthusiastic about his new role as a legislator, Dr. Kratz had already crafted legislation to benefit education and the students of the State of Michigan. His passion for education will forever be memorialized by the Dr. Gerald B. Kratz Education Center on the campus of the Jackson Intermediate School District, and through the Jerry Kratz Scholarship Fund at Jackson Community College.

Jerry's commitment to public service was evident in the many community organizations he tirelessly supported. He volunteered countless hours with the Jackson-Hillsdale branch of the American Red Cross, many of which were spent raising money for local disaster relief projects as part of the Star Search Committee. He was dedicated to serving those who are all too often overlooked, providing transportation for disabled veterans, driving them to the VA hospital in Ann Arbor, and serving on the Board of Directors of the Dove Counseling Clinic, which provides mental health care to the needy, and was a supporter of the pro-life movement. A positive role model for our youth, he volunteered his time with the Great Sauk Trail Boy Scout Council, serving as Vice President of Finance. Jerry was also active with the Rotary, Jaycees, Kiwanis, and served as an Extraordinary Minister of his Church. Committed to business and economic development, he served on the Economic Opportunity Commission, the Private Industry Council, and the local Chamber of Commerce.

Most important to Jerry was his family. With his wife of 44 years, Eleanor, Jerry had four children: Kevin, a veterinarian; Kurt, a doctor; Kim, a health care administrator; and Kent, a teacher. Jerry also took great pride in his seven grandchildren.

Jerry will be missed by the countless individuals whose lives he touched with his boundless enthusiasm and passion for helping others.

IN MEMORY OF MARION H. ''TOM'' PARSONS

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 31, 2003

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I inform the House of the death of Mr. Tom Parsons of Harrisonville, MO.

Mr. Parsons was born in Harrisonville, MO, on January 12, 1912, son of William Garrett and Mary (Hodger) Parsons. He attended Harrisonville High School and attended Central Missouri State Teachers College, Warrensburg, MO, for one year. He was united in marriage to Nina Rogers of Lockwood, MO, on July 7, 1934.

Mr. Parsons served in the United States Army during World War II. In 1952, Mr. Parsons was elected to serve as Cass County Treasurer and ex-officio Collector. After leaving public office, he became a partner in Congor Abstract and Insurance Company, Harrisonville. He also was a farmer and stockman, real estate appriaser, car salesman for Henderson Ford, and a real estate salesman for Schumacher Realty, all of Harrisonville. Mr. Parsons also served as Harrisonville's City Marshall and served as a deputy sheriff.

Mr. Parsons was a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #4409 and a member of the American Legion, Hurley Lee Spicer Post #42. He was also a member of Cass County Masonic Lodge #147 AF&AM and the Cass County Democratic Club. Mr. Parsons was an active member of First Baptist Church of Harrisonville, where he served as Sunday school teacher. He was a lifetime Harrisonville resident.

Mr. Speaker, I know the members of the House will join me in extending heartfelt condolences to his family; his son William; his two grandchildren, Tye and Amanda; and his two great-grandchildren.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER WATERSHED STUDY ACT OF 2003

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 31, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the San Gabriel River Watershed Study Act of 2003.

This bill will direct the Department of Interior to do a special resources study on the San Gabriel River, and portions of the San Gabriel Mountains to look for ways that we might improve our open and green space.

This study is vital to my community.

Today, children in my district are living next to toxic waste dumps where their playgrounds amount to little more than concrete slabs.

As a result of a poor environment, over 35,000 children suffer from asthma in the San Gabriel Valley—the largest number in the Los Angeles area.

Twenty-five percent of our water is contaminated.

And there is less then ½ acre of open space per 1000 people—a number that is well below the national average.

There is a growing concern that poor planning has resulted in environmental devastation in the San Gabriel Valley and in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains.

The threat of over-building on the last remnants of open space has increased concern about the cumulative impacts on what little remains of our natural resources.

This concern has reached critical mass, sparking community action to form local conservancies and land trusts as part of a comprehensive solution to watershed protection.

As many as ten State conservancies have formed or are being formed in the greater San Gabriel Valley.

As a California State Senator, I was proud to join in the fight by authoring legislation that created the largest state urban conservancy in California, affecting over 3 million people.

It is now time for the federal government to offer the next step of protection and revitalization in the San Gabriel Valley.

This study is the first step in that venture.

Last congress, this bill passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate unanimously but was unfortunately unable to be sent to the President because of time constraints.

In light of Congress' past endorsement, it is my hope that this bill can pass this body early in the 108th Congress.

The bill that I reintroduce today is the result of many hours of work with various stakeholders and emphasizes the special needs of the San Gabriel Valley, especially those related to flood control, drainage and public infrastructure.

These compromises led to its endorsement by over 30 local governments and organizations.

It is my hope that this incredible past support will translate into this bill's swift passage.

Before I close, let me say thank you to former Resources Committee Chairman Hansen, current Resources Committee Chairman POMBO, Ranking Member RAHALL, Chairman RADANOVICH and Members of the Resources Committee for assisting me in drafting this important bill.

Their guidance is a testament to what is good about the legislative process and I look forward to continuing to work within that process this Congress.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.